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STAFF NOTES:

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This publication is prepared for regional specialists in the Washington community by the Middle East - Africa Division, Office of Current Intelligence, with occasional contributions from other offices within the Directorate of Intelligence. Comments and queries are welcome. They should be directed to the authors of the individual articles.

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UAE

Barrier to Ties with Soviets Removed

Saudi Arabia reportedly is no longer standing in the way of the establishment of diplomatic relations between the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and the Soviet Union. On a number of occasions since 1972, the UAE has seemed ready to respond to the Soviets' arduous courting, but UAE President Zayid has always backed away from establishing ties with Moscow and Eastern European countries in deference to King Faysal's opposition. Since Faysal's assassination in March, there have been some signals of a softening by Riyadh on the issue.

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It may be some time, however, before the UAE actually exchanges ambassadors with the USSR. The issue has been referred to the foreign ministry, which will prepare an assessment of how the establishment of diplomatic relations with the Soviets would affect the UAE's internal, intra-Arab, and international affairs.

The Soviets have been eager for some time to break out of their diplomatic isolation in the gulf, where their only embassy is in Kuwait. If the Soviets successfully forge ties with the UAE, they will be encouraged to try again to wear down Saudi Arabia's resistance to relations. (SECRET NOFORN NOCONTRACT)

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China-Pakistan-Bangladesh

Relations Established

The recent announcements of Pakistani and Chinese agreement to establish full diplomatic relations with Bangladesh will probably cause some concern in New Delhi and Moscow.

From independence late in 1971 to the present, Bangladesh has had no formal ties with either Pakistan or China. During the largely personal rule of Mujibur Rahman, which lasted from 1971 until the coup in August, relations were close with India and the Soviet Union.

The post-coup regime has emphasized its intention of following a more "balanced" foreign policy. Islamabad and Peking welcomed this change in Dacca, and an early exchange of diplomatic missions had been expected.

The Bengalees will be careful not to overplay the importance of their new relations with Pakistan and China in order not to cause a strong reaction in New Delhi. Since the coup, officials in Dacca have tried to reassure the Indian government that the special relationship with New Delhi, embodied in the bilateral friendship treaty of 1972, remains a cornerstone of their foreign policy.

A special envoy was also sent to Moscow, presumably to lessen any Soviet fears of dramatic foreign policy changes in Dacca.

There is no assurance of smooth sailing in future Pakistan-Bangladesh relations. Previous attempts to resolve the two issues left over from the civil war of 1971--a division of assets and the movement of refugees to Pakistan--have been unsuccessful. Each country may be more willing to compromise now than in the past, but hard bargaining can be anticipated.

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1 Dacca apparently values ties with Pakistan for the revived trade that will now be possible, and probably also for the intermediary role that Pakistan could play in bettering relations between Dacca and other Muslim countries. Pakistan's Prime Minister Bhutto, in addition to seeing possible economic benefits from improved relations with Dacca, probably gains satisfaction from what will be regarded as a political setback to India.

2 China, which originally recognized the government in Dacca at Pakistan's urging following the coup, reportedly told Bengalee officials that it was waiting for Pakistan to act first in establishing relations. The final details of the Pakistani and Chinese agreements with Bangladesh were worked out at the UN by the Bangladesh and Chinese foreign ministers and Bhutto's top foreign policy adviser. The Bengalees have long sought Chinese recognition in hopes of securing increased trade and economic assistance. (SECRET NOFORN)



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